



Connecticut General Assembly – Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing – 2-16-17
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Testimony by Ralph Holyst, in opposition to limiting eligibility for Husky A and to imposing a \$1,000 cap on Medicaid adult dental services

Dear Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Ralph Holyst, and I am the Vice President of the Board of Directors and a patient at First Choice Health Centers, which is a Federal Qualified Health Center. **I am writing to ask you to reject the Governor's budget proposals to reduce Husky A eligibility for adults from 155% of the federal poverty level (FPL) to 138%, and to reject the \$1000 cap on adult dental Medicaid.**

The consequences of reducing eligibility to 138% of FPL:

- **Would cut off about 9,500 low-income parents from health benefits.**
 - As a patient of First Choice Health Centers, I have my own health insurance, which is still very costly for my family and me. Our premiums and deductibles are high. One of the reasons I am a patient at First Choice Health Center is because it is cost effective and provides great Healthcare. As a Board Member, I worry about our low income families who will lose their healthcare if the Governor's budget proposal goes through as is. These families will have no alternative...they will either not go to a doctor or dentist or use the Emergency Department as their health care home.
 - First Choice Health Centers, along with all FQHCs' are the main source of health care for low income parents and their children. For a parent with two children, limiting eligibility for Husky A would reduce the income limit from \$31,139 to \$27,725.
- **Would mean NO dental benefits for these 9,500 citizens.**
 - Eliminating dental benefits for 9,500 CT citizens would be detrimental to their overall health according to the National Academies. Lack of regular oral health care has serious consequences, the report says, including increased risk of respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease and diabetes, as well as **inappropriate use of hospital emergency departments for preventable dental diseases.**

The consequences of a \$1000 cap on adult dental Medicaid:

- Imposing a cap on Medicaid adult dental services would impact patients from seeking expensive dental care such as getting a filling, root canal or even x-rays. This in turn would increase their risks of infections, gum disease and overall oral health problems later on. The loss of teeth impacts individuals' ability to eat; what may appear to be a cosmetic issue on the surface can lead to serious nutritional deficiencies and subsequent medical issues (along with other social and employment issues). It is more expensive later on if you don't take care of these preventive items up front.

Dental Medicaid is a good investment. **Why make a cut that will negatively impact the health of our must vulnerable population and inevitably increase costs to the state?**

I know you understand the importance of good oral health care for *all* Connecticut residents. I urge you to support this very important measure to ensure comprehensive dental care for low-income and vulnerable adults. If I can be of any assistance, please contact me. Thank you for your time and your commitment to this issue.

Sincerely,

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